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General Assembly

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Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space
Fifty-eighth session
Vienna, 10-19 June 2015

Draft report

Chapter II

Recommendations and decisions

D. Space and sustainable development

1. The Committee considered the agenda item entitled "Space and sustainable development", in accordance with General Assembly resolution 69/85.

2. The representatives of Brazil, Egypt, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, Pakistan, the United States and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) made statements under the item. During the general exchange of views, statements relating to the item were also made by representatives of other member States.

3. The Committee had before it a conference room paper entitled "Update on the recent developments in the context of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and the post-2015 development agenda" (A/AC.105/2015/CRP.13).

4. The Committee heard a presentation by the representative of India entitled "Use of space technology inputs for sustainable development in India: an update".

5. The Committee noted that space science and technology applications could play a significant role in enhancing environmental sustainability and socioeconomic development for all countries. The Committee also noted the value of space technology and applications and space-derived data and information in contributing to sustainable development, including by improving the formulation and subsequent implementation of policies and programmes of action in connection with land and water management, marine and coastal ecosystems, health care, climate change, disaster risk reduction and emergency response, energy, navigation, seismic monitoring, natural resources management, biodiversity, agriculture and food security.

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6. The Committee also noted the information provided by States on their actions and programmes aimed at increasing awareness and understanding in society of the applications of space science and technology for meeting development needs.

7. The Committee further noted the continued role played by the International Space Station in education and outreach to educational communities worldwide.

8. The Committee noted with satisfaction the large number of outreach activities carried out at the regional level for building capacity through education and training in using space science and technology applications for sustainable development. The Committee also noted with appreciation the role played in space-related education by the regional centres for space science and technology education, affiliated to the United Nations.

9. The Committee noted a number of space-related conferences, competitions, exhibitions, symposiums and seminars worldwide connecting educators and students and providing them with training and educational opportunities.

10. The Committee commended the Secretariat for continuously providing updates on the implementation of the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development at the intergovernmental level and the formulation of the post-2015 development agenda, as contained in conference room papers A/AC.105/2013/CRP.7, A/AC.105/2014/CRP.15, A/AC.105/C.1/2014/CRP.21, A/AC.105/C.1/2015/CRP.26 and A/AC.105/2015/CRP.13.

11. The Committee requested the Office for Outer Space Affairs to continue taking an active part in the United Nations System Task Team on the Post-2015 United Nations Development Agenda and other inter-agency mechanisms for the processes related to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and the post-2015 development agenda, within its capacities, in order to promote the inclusion of space-related references and elements in the documentation generated by the United Nations Secretariat under those processes.

12. Some delegations expressed the view that it was essential to promote international cooperation and strengthen intraregional cooperation, exchange expertise and best practices and build capacity at the national and regional levels, as international and regional cooperation in the field of space activities could generate synergies and create awareness of the benefits that space science and technology provided for sustainable development.

13. The view was expressed that the Committee should facilitate the adequate representation of space-related capacities in international, regional and national sustainable development processes, and their institutional integration into those processes.

14. The view was expressed that the development of space technology should be further encouraged and affirmed as a crucial element in the post-2015 development agenda.

15. The view was expressed that the international community should enhance mutual partnerships and continue to provide technical assistance to Member States, in particular developing countries, including by providing adequate resources for, transferring knowledge about and building capacity in space technology.

F. Space and water

16. The Committee considered the agenda item entitled "Space and water", in accordance with General Assembly resolution 69/85.

17. The representatives of Brazil, Egypt, France, India, Japan, Pakistan and the United States made statements under the item. During the general exchange of views, statements relating to the item were also made by other member States.

18. The Committee heard presentations on the following topics:

(a) Space-based technology for water: activities and achievements of the Italian Space Agency, by the representative of Italy;

(b) The ResEAU Project: producing an atlas of the hydrogeology of the Republic of Chad from optical and radar satellite imagery, by the representative of Switzerland.

19. In the course of the discussion, delegations reviewed national and cooperative water-related activities, giving examples of national programmes and bilateral, regional and international cooperation.

20. The Committee noted that water and the issues related to it were becoming one of the most critical environmental problems facing humankind, often with political implications, and that the conservation and proper utilization of existing water resources were of paramount importance for sustaining life on Earth. In that connection, space-derived data could support policymakers in making informed decisions on water resources management.

21. The Committee noted that a large number of space-borne platforms addressed water-related issues and that space-derived data were used extensively in water management. The Committee also noted that space technology and applications, combined with non-space technologies, played an important role in addressing many water-related issues, including the observation and study of global water cycles and unusual climate patterns, the mapping of water courses, the monitoring of glaciers, the estimation of snowmelt run-offs, the planning and management of reservoirs and irrigation projects, the monitoring and mitigation of the effects of floods, droughts and cyclones and improving the timeliness and accuracy of forecasts.

22. The Committee noted that the Asian Water Cycle Initiative, an endeavour by the Group on Earth Observations (GEO), continued developing an information system of systems to promote the implementation of integrated water resources management through the integration and sharing of data as a basis for decision-making with regard to national water policies in 20 Asian countries.

G. Space and climate change

23. The Committee considered the agenda item entitled "Space and climate change", in accordance with General Assembly resolution 69/85.

24. The representatives of Algeria, Egypt, France, Indonesia, Japan, Pakistan, South Africa and the United States made statements under the item. A statement was also made by the observer for El Salvador. During the general exchange of views,

statements relating to the item were also made by representatives of other member States and permanent observers.

25. The Committee heard a presentation entitled "Use of Earth observation inputs for climate change studies in India", by the representative of India.

26. The Committee welcomed the panel discussion organized by France and entitled "Space and climate change: tools for characterizing climate change, helping societies and fostering adaptation", held on the margins of its current session. The panel discussion underlined the key role of space tools in the negotiations leading up to the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Paris from 30 November to 11 December 2015.

27. The Committee further welcomed the intention expressed during the panel discussions by the representatives of space agencies to adopt a joint declaration on climate change and disaster management at the Heads of Space Agencies Summit on Climate Change and Disaster Management, organized by the International Academy of Astronautics, to be hosted by the Mexican Space Agency in Mexico City on 17 and 18 September 2015. Such a joint declaration would be submitted as an official contribution to the Conference of the Parties and would present an additional opportunity for the Committee to reiterate its long-standing position that space science and space applications are of vital importance for improving fundamental knowledge of the universe and for improving the daily lives of people worldwide, as stated in "The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development", adopted in 1999 by the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

28. The Committee noted the continued alarming trend in global warming, as indicated in the report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) entitled "Climate change 2014: impacts, adaptation, and vulnerability", and the adverse impacts of climate change on all nations, in particular developing nations, which were affected disproportionately.

29. The Committee noted the crucial and ever-increasing role of satellite-based global weather and climate observation data for observing climate change, mitigating its causes and adapting to its consequences. The Committee underscored the importance of bilateral and multilateral partnerships in activities related to climate change and in the area of Earth observation, such as the efforts undertaken by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), GEO and the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites at its 28th plenary meeting, held from 28 to 30 October 2014 in Tromsø, Norway, and stressed its commitment to monitoring the climate from space through coordinated planning, production, improvement and availability of space-based data records on a global scale.

30. The Committee also noted the importance of global initiatives aimed at providing support to combating climate change through the use of space tools, such as the Global Climate Observing System, which provides support to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Coordination Group for Meteorological Satellites, the World Climate Research Programme and IPCC. The Committee further noted that in pursuing efforts to achieve a global response to climate change, cooperation between the Committee and UNFCCC should be strengthened.

31. The Committee noted that space-derived data, together with ground-based observations, provided an integrated perspective on the changing environment of the Earth and were crucial for gaining an understanding of the implications of global climate change for humankind. The Committee also noted that more should be done to promote the use of space applications in efforts to adapt to climate change and minimize its adverse impacts. The Committee further noted that successful national climate change adaptation policies should be integrated into the post-2015 development agenda.

32. The Committee recognized the importance of regional initiatives such as the initiative of the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum entitled "Space applications for the environment", which encouraged the use of space applications in environmental monitoring for climate change mitigation and adaptation.

33. The Committee noted that a number of conferences were scheduled to take place in the lead-up to the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, such as the international conference organized by the Algerian Space Agency entitled "Climate change, a reality to be considered in development trajectories: modelling, space tools and adaptation", to be held from 4 to 6 October 2015 in Algiers. The conference would focus on the impact of climate change in the Mediterranean region and aim to strengthen regional cooperation on the issue.

34. The Committee noted a number of ongoing national efforts to build, launch and operate Earth-observation satellites to track the manifestations and effects of climate change and the continued readiness on the part of spacefaring nations to share Earth observation data freely and openly.

H. Use of space technology in the United Nations system

35. The Committee considered the agenda item entitled "Use of space technology in the United Nations system", in accordance with General Assembly resolution 69/85.

36. The representatives of India, Indonesia, Japan and the Republic of Korea made statements under the item. During the general exchange of views, statements relating to the item were also made by representatives of other member States.

37. The Committee heard presentations on the following topics:

(a) China's manned space programme, by the representative of China;

(b) Progress report of the Regional Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific (China), by the representative of China;

(c) Utilizing space and GIS applications for effective disaster risk management: practices of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in Asia and the Pacific, by the observer for ESCAP.

38. The Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs made a statement informing the Committee about the outcome of the thirty-fifth session of the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities (UN-Space), held in Bonn, Germany, on 27 and 28 May 2015.

39. The Committee welcomed the agreement of UN-Space that the focus of the report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of space-related activities within the United Nations system for the period 2016-2017 would be on assisting the Committee in its preparations for the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space ("UNISPACE+50"), which would be the theme of the sessions of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies in 2018, and to provide an overview of efforts by United Nations entities aimed at contributing to the main pillars of "UNISPACE+50" and at promoting international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space.

40. The Committee welcomed with appreciation the UN-Space special report on space for global health (A/AC.105/1091).

41. The Committee noted with satisfaction that the twelfth open informal session of UN-Space had been organized as an integral part of the joint United Nations/Germany International Conference on Earth Observation: Global Solutions for the Challenges of Sustainable Development in Societies at Risk, held in Bonn, Germany, from 26 to 28 May 2015. The session, held as a joint UN-Space-Bonn Conference high-level panel on space-based information for development, provided an opportunity for the participants of the Conference to engage in a dialogue with the United Nations system to review challenges and opportunities in mainstreaming Earth observations into key areas under the post-2015 development framework, and to examine common perspectives for increasing the use of space-derived information for the attainment of global development goals.

42. The Committee noted the cooperative efforts between member States and United Nations entities to promote the use of space technology to resolve global issues faced by humanity, including in building the resilience of nations to multiple shocks. In that connection, the Committee took note of the adoption in Japan in March 2015 of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, and the activities under the Asia-Pacific Plan of Action for Applications of Space Technology and Geographic Information Systems for Disaster Risk Reduction and Sustainable Development, 2012-2017.

43. The Committee requested the Office for Outer Space Affairs to further promote, through United Nations entities, the increased practical application of space science and technology for development, in view of the catalytic role that such application could play for development in the post-2015 context.

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Chapter II

Recommendations and decisions

E. Spin-off benefits of space technology: review of current status

1. The Committee considered the agenda item entitled "Spin-off benefits of space technology: review of current status", in accordance with General Assembly resolution 69/85.

2. The representatives of Brazil, Canada, Colombia, India, Japan, the Republic of Korea and the United States made statements under the item.

3. The Committee heard the following technical presentations under the item:

(a) "Space life science: the fallout on Earth", by the representative of Italy;

(b) "Examples of Canadian spin-offs and spin-ins from space technologies", by the representative of Canada.

4. The Committee took note of the information provided by States on their national practices regarding spin-offs from space technology that had resulted in the introduction of strategies for the management of regional economic development. It also took note of innovations in numerous scientific areas, such as medicine, biology, chemistry and materials sciences. It further took note of practical applications in civil society, such as the use of enhanced robotics in medicine and of colour photometry to monitor water levels for the benefit of agriculture, and the use of enhanced technologies to reduce energy consumption, improve techniques in lubrication, cutting and drilling, and to facilitate resource exploration, infrastructure improvements, firefighting, geographical positioning, navigation and the tracking of search and rescue personnel.

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5. The Committee agreed that spin-offs from space technology constituted a powerful engine for technological innovation and growth in both the industrial and the service sectors. It also agreed that spin-offs could be applied to achieve social and economic objectives and sustainable development goals.

6. The Committee noted that Governments had developed national policies directed specifically at disseminating space technologies and actively promoting spin-offs by streamlining licensing and procedures to protect intellectual property to facilitate and support the market entry of products derived from space technology by start-up companies.

7. The Committee agreed that the use of spin-offs from space technology should be further promoted because it had fostered the development of innovative technologies in other sectors, thus advancing national economies and contributing to a better quality of life.

8. The Committee noted that Governments had successfully involved the private sector and academia in various projects in which spin-offs from space technology were put to use.

9. The NASA publication "Spinoff 2015" was made available to the Committee.

I. Future role of the Committee

10. The Committee considered the agenda item entitled "Future role of the Committee", in accordance with General Assembly resolution 69/85.

11. The representatives of Canada, Chile, China, the Czech Republic, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Poland, the Russian Federation, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Viet Nam made statements under the item. During the general exchange of views, statements relating to the item were also made by representatives of other member States.

1. Joint ad hoc meeting of the First and Fourth Committees of the General Assembly

12. The Committee welcomed the joint ad hoc meeting of the First and Fourth Committees of the General Assembly, to be convened by the Assembly in accordance with its resolution 69/38. The meeting was to address possible challenges to space security and the long-term sustainability of space activities.

13. The Committee noted that the joint ad hoc meeting would be held on 22 October 2015 in the afternoon, and that it would be chaired by the Presidents of the First and Fourth Committees. The Presidents would issue a summary of the debate in accordance with the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

14. The Committee noted that a decision on the format of the joint ad hoc meeting would be made by the Bureaux of the First and Fourth Committees. It requested the Secretariat to communicate to the Bureaux the recommendations made by the Committee and subsequently inform States members of the Committee about the decision made.

15. The Committee recommended that the joint ad hoc meeting should comprise a panel discussion followed by general debate. The panel should comprise the Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-building Measures in Outer Space Activities, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and the Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs.

16. The Committee recommended that the following subtopics should be addressed in the joint ad hoc meeting: space debris, space weather, the long-term sustainability of outer space activities, and transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities.

17. The Committee noted that the note by the Secretariat entitled "Recommendations of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-building Measures in Outer Space Activities: views of States members of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space" (A/AC.105/1080 and Add.1 and 2) would be made available to the joint ad hoc meeting.

18. The view was expressed that, in line with General Assembly resolution 68/50, on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities, the Committee could provide the joint ad hoc meeting with a report on the practical measures undertaken by States members of the Committee relating to the recommendations of the Group of Governmental Experts. The report could summarize responses to the questionnaire distributed to member States regarding such practical measures and would be circulated in advance among the member States that had contributed to the report, so that it could be updated and then submitted to the joint ad hoc meeting.

19. The view was expressed that the joint ad hoc meeting could discuss, among other things, the implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures proposed in the report of the Group of Governmental Experts, the development of a universally accepted international code of conduct and the interpretation of the right to self-defence in outer space.

2. UN-Space and the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-building Measures in Outer Space Activities

20. The Committee requested the Secretariat to issue a special report by UN-Space for consideration by the Committee at its fifty-ninth session on the implementation of the report of the Group of Governmental Experts as pertaining to the United Nations system, and to coordinate the preparation of that report with relevant United Nations entities. The report should note how United Nations entities supported the implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities in accordance with their existing mandates, and identify how United Nations entities could assist Member States in implementing the recommendations of the Group. The report should also address means to coordinate the work of United Nations entities in line with the overall recommendations of the report of the Group as endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 68/50.

3. Future role of the Committee

21. The Committee agreed that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee should establish an expert group on the topic of space objects and events. The expert group should meet on the margins of the fifty-third session of the Subcommittee to draft

its terms of reference and present them to the Subcommittee, and should designate a rapporteur. The Committee agreed that no Secretariat services would be required for the expert group, but that the Office should be substantively involved in its work. In order to advance its work, the points of contact for the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities could be contacted for further consultations in the intersessional period leading up to the fifty-third session of the Subcommittee, to be held in 2016.

22. The view was expressed that, owing to the growing number of actors in outer space and the diversification of outer space activities, there were a number of cross-cutting issues that the Committee should address, as it was the appropriate forum for resolving issues pertaining to space law, ensuring the safety and security of outer space, and making certain that the potential benefits of space science and technology were distributed equitably.

23. The view was expressed that the Committee was the main platform for undertaking the development of an effective set of tools that would ensure the safe and responsible conduct of outer space activities, and for undertaking an assessment of the practical use of the recommendations contained in the report of the Group of Governmental Experts. Many of those recommendations could be converted into regulatory measures and could be implemented as future guidelines for the conduct of outer space activities.

24. The view was expressed that strengthening the rule of law in outer space, promoting international cooperation in outer space, capacity-building and the long-term sustainability of outer space activities represented the core of the Committee's work. The view was expressed that the Committee should improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its work by aligning itself with new developments in outer space activities so as to make progress in the following areas: strengthening the rule of law in outer space by focusing on promoting the practical application of existing outer space treaties; improving capacity-building by encouraging the full utilization of the initiatives of the Office for Outer Space Affairs, such as the Basic Space Science Initiative, the Human Space Technology Initiative and the seminars on space law undertaken by the Office; enabling technology transfers and eliminating technology embargos; and extending the support of the Office to the regional centres for space science and technology education, affiliated to the United Nations, to deepen international cooperation with a clear focus on the needs of developing countries and the promotion of action-oriented, project-based, equal and mutually beneficial cooperation so as to enable the further development of outer space activities.

25. The view was expressed that the Committee should continue to promote regional and interregional cooperation and strengthen its engagement with space-related regional mechanisms and initiatives, and that it should also examine new forms of cooperation to advance space utilization, with a special focus on collaboration between spacefaring and emerging spacefaring nations to bridge the development gap and work jointly towards the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda.

26. The view was expressed that the Committee should continue to work on elaborating and implementing future procedures to allow for greater efficiency and transparency in its work.

J. Other matters

27. The Committee considered the agenda item entitled "Other matters", in accordance with General Assembly resolution 69/85.

28. The representatives of Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Czech Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, France, Germany, Hungary, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Italy, Japan, Kenya, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Mexico, the Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Romania, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, the Sudan, Switzerland, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States made statements under the item. Statements were also made under the item by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the League of Arab States, and by the representative of Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union. During the general exchange of views, statements relating to the item were also made by representatives of other member States.

29. The Committee heard a presentation entitled "Space education for young people", by the representative of France.

1. Fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

30. The Committee had before it a note by the Secretariat entitled "Fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space: theme of the sessions of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and its Legal Subcommittee in 2018" (A/AC.105/L.297).

31. The Committee welcomed the proposals contained in the note and endorsed the plan of work contained in it, agreeing that the Secretariat should begin the preparatory work in the lead-up to the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in 2018 ("UNISPACE+50"), in close consultation with the group of members of the bureaux of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies (the "Group of 15"), which would serve as the steering committee for the "UNISPACE+50" process. The Committee also encouraged the Secretariat to work with the Committee on Space Research, the International Aeronautical Federation and the International Academy of Astronautics in preparing the background documents for "UNISPACE+50".

32. The Committee requested the Secretariat to report to the Committee and its Subcommittees, at their respective sessions in 2016, on the progress made in the preparatory work.

2. Composition of the bureaux of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies for the period 2016-2017

33. The Committee noted the nominations by the Asia-Pacific States, the Eastern European States, the Latin American and Caribbean States and the Western European and other States of their candidates for the offices of Chair of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, First Vice-Chair of the Committee, Chair of

the Legal Subcommittee and Chair of the Committee, respectively, for the period 2016-2017, as per General Assembly resolution 69/85, para. 29.

34. The Committee also noted that the African States had decided that the Sudan would nominate its representative for the office of Second Vice-Chair/Rapporteur of the Committee for the period 2016-2017. In that regard, the Committee asked the Sudan to nominate its representative for that office before the seventieth session of the General Assembly.

3. Membership of the Committee

35. The Committee had before it the applications for membership in the Committee from the following six States Members of the United Nations: El Salvador (A/AC.105/2015/CRP.4), Israel (A/AC.105/2015/CRP.8), Oman (A/AC.105/2015/CRP.7), Qatar (A/AC.105/2015/CRP.3), Sri Lanka (A/AC.105/2015/CRP.5) and United Arab Emirates (A/AC.105/2015/CRP.6).

36. Some delegations expressed the view that the applications for membership should be considered on their merits and on a case-by-case basis. The applications should not be considered as a package with all six applications together because membership in an intergovernmental body, as a matter of principle, required the consideration of each applicant State.

37. Some delegations expressed the view that all six applications should be considered as a package and that no individual action should be taken on a case-by-case basis. Such consideration was important on the basis of universality and inclusiveness and in view of the consensus tradition of the Committee.

38. Some delegations expressed the view that the application by Israel should not be accepted owing to broader politically sensitive issues relating to fundamental principles beyond the scope of the Committee with respect to maintaining international peace and security. Those delegations also expressed the view that Israel was acting in contravention of those fundamental principles and that, with an advanced military capacity, it could use membership in the Committee for military purposes, which was against the objectives of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

39. Some delegations expressed the view that all six States, including Israel, which had an active programme for civil space activities, should be recommended for membership in the Committee, and that that would strengthen the Committee. Those delegations also expressed the view that the consideration of membership should not be politicized beyond the activities of the Committee and that the Committee would benefit from the commitment and involvement of those countries in meeting its objective to foster international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space.

40. Some delegations expressed the view that membership in the Committee should be connected to the accession to the United Nations treaties on outer space and that applicant States should be asked to accede to one or more of those treaties, at least the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, if they had not already done so.

41. The view was expressed that the applications submitted by El Salvador, Oman, Qatar, Sri Lanka and the United Arab Emirates should be recommended for membership as a package in view of the fact that no objections had been raised regarding those applications, while the application of Israel, regarding which objections had been raised, should be transmitted to the General Assembly for action without any comment by the Committee.

42. The Committee noted that the history of membership in the Committee had been a complex matter, including the past practice of sharing seats among member States on a rotating basis, past agreement on limited increase in membership growth and consideration of equitable geographical distribution among the five regional groups, and that for many years the Committee had transmitted membership applications directly to the General Assembly for action without any consideration or recommendation made by the Committee. The Committee also noted, in that regard, that its practice regarding membership had evolved over the years and that, since the abolition of the principle of equitable geographical distribution and limitation of membership growth in 2004, there had been no firm procedures established for its consideration of membership. The Committee agreed that, in view of the divergent views expressed at its present session regarding the method to be used for consideration of the applications for membership, the only way forward was for the Committee not to make any recommendation or comment on any of the present applications. In that regard, the Committee noted that the applications should be submitted to the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly for its action on the basis of a separate draft General Assembly decision to be tabled by an applicant State or group of applicant States, and that the application should not be addressed in the draft resolution on international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space.

4. Organizational matters

43. The Committee endorsed the agreement of the Legal Subcommittee at its fifty-fourth session, in 2015 (A/AC.105/1090, para. 235), to discontinue the use of unedited transcripts and to use digital recordings on a permanent basis, on the understanding that the digital recording application should be further enhanced.

44. In accordance with the decision made by the Committee in 2011 (A/66/20, para. 297), and on the basis of the proposal made by the Secretariat to discontinue the use of unedited transcripts (A/AC.105/C.2/L.282), the Committee agreed to use digital recordings on a permanent basis, and agreed that the digital recording application should be further enhanced.

45. The Committee endorsed the decision of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, at its fifty-second session, in 2015 (A/AC.105/1088, para. 275), to revise the criteria established by the Committee at its fifty-fourth session, in 2011 (A/66/20, para. 298), and the agreement by the Subcommittee made at its fiftieth session, in 2013 (A/AC.105/1038, para. 242), in order to secure the time needed for the work of the working groups and to give the Secretariat a clear mandate to implement those criteria. In that regard, the Committee endorsed the recommendation of the Subcommittee that the same criteria should apply, as appropriate, to the organization of work of the Committee, which, like the Subcommittee, regularly had a high number of scientific and technical presentations.

46. The Committee requested the Secretariat to demonstrate to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, at its fifty-third session, in 2016, any available technical means of assisting delegations in keeping track of the length of statements and presentations.

47. The Committee requested the Secretariat to make available for the sessions of the Committee and its Subcommittees, in 2016, a compendium containing the rules, procedures and practices, including the processing of documentation, of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies.

5. Draft provisional agenda for the fifty-ninth session of the Committee

48. The Committee recommended that the following items should be considered at its fifty-ninth session, in 2016.

1. Election of officers.
2. General exchange of views.
3. Ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes.
4. Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on its fifty-third session.
5. Report of the Legal Subcommittee on its fifty-fifth session.
6. Space and sustainable development.
7. Spin-off benefits of space technology: review of current status.
8. Space and water.
9. Space and climate change.
10. Use of space technology in the United Nations system.
11. Future role of the Committee.
12. Other matters.

K. Schedule of work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies

49. The Committee agreed on the following tentative timetable for its session and those of its Subcommittees in 2016:

	Date	*Location*
Scientific and Technical Subcommittee	15 to 26 February 2016	Vienna
Legal Subcommittee	4 to 15 April 2016	Vienna
Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space	8 to 17 June 2016	Vienna